

1241782

Registered provider: Lancashire County Council

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is registered to provide care and accommodation for up to six young people who may have emotional and/or behavioural needs. The home is operated by a local authority.

The current manager was registered with Ofsted on 16 December 2019.

Inspection dates: 3 to 4 September 2019

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected requires improvement to be good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers good

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 14 February 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: sustained effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/02/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
20/06/2018	Full	Good
08/03/2018	Interim	Improved effectiveness
03/05/2017	Full	Requires improvement to be good

What does the children's home need to do to improve?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
The protection of children standard The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child; manage relationships between children to prevent them from harming each other. (Regulation 12(1)(2)(a)(i)(iv))	11/10/2019

Recommendations

- Children's care plans should reflect their day-to-day needs, taking into account the child's gender, religion, ethnicity, cultural and linguistic background, sexual identity, mental health, any disability, their assessed needs, previous experiences and any relevant plans. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 14, paragraph 3.2)
- Records must be kept of the administration of all medication, which includes occasions when prescribed medication is refused. Regulation 23 requires the registered person to ensure that they make suitable arrangements to manage, administer and dispose of any medication. These are fundamentally the same sorts of arrangements as a good parent would make but are subject to additional safeguards. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 35, paragraph 7.15)
- Staff must help each child to prepare for any moves from the home, whether they are returning home, moving to another placement or adult care, or to live independently. This includes supporting the child to develop emotional and mental resilience to cope without the home's support and, where the child is moving to live independently, practical skills such as cooking, housework, budgeting and personal self-care. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations

including the quality standards', page 17, paragraph 3.27)

- When a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible local authority must provide an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. Homes should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30)
- The registered person should ensure that all incidents of control, discipline and restraint are subject to systems of regular scrutiny to ensure that their use is fair and the above principles as set out in 9.35 are respected. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.36)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people live in a home that is safe and happy. They are cared for by a stable staff team that knows them well and understands their needs. Young people spoke extremely highly of staff and described very positive relationships. A parent described the home as 'full of love and warmth', and a young person said, 'It's nice living in this house. It's friendly all the time.'

Staff take time to listen to young people and understand the things that are important to them. They work hard to help young people explore their thoughts and feelings and to express themselves. One staff member has used an innovative key working tool to assist a young person to explore some very sensitive and challenging issues.

Staff have a good understanding of the barriers to education that some young people face. Young people are encouraged to aspire, and staff work well with education providers to ensure that each young person has individual support. Two young people have recently moved on to further education and have been successful in gaining places on courses that will support their chosen careers.

Young people have regular opportunities to engage in fun and fulfilling activities. One young person spoke of a recent holiday in Edinburgh, which he very much enjoyed. A parent explained that she had been able to join her son and staff on some day trips, which she appreciates.

Some young people will be moving on to less supported settings in the near future. The manager has advocated for the young people to ensure that there is appropriate pathway planning in place. However, young people's internal care plans lack detail about the support they need to help them to prepare. Individualised programmes based on young people's strengths and needs would help to ensure that their support is focused and consistent.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Managers and staff have a clear understanding of safeguarding procedures. Any concerns are dealt with promptly and in liaison with the relevant authorities. This helps to ensure that young people are protected from further harm.

It is evident that young people are safer as a result of the care they receive. Young people with a history of high-risk behaviours, such as going missing from home or being involved in anti-social behaviour, have settled well and reduced high-risk behaviours.

Managers and staff work effectively with partner agencies to safeguard young people who go missing from the home. Each young person has an individualised protocol, which provides guidance for staff about the action they must take if a young person becomes missing. Some aspects of this guidance could be improved, for example by ensuring that there is clear information about the young person's contacts and places where they are known to go.

Some shortfalls were identified in relation to risk assessment and management. For example, it is not always clear that information from impact risk assessments is fully considered when decisions about the admission of new young people are made. In another example, risk management plans in relation to bullying do not contain all the relevant information or clear guidance for staff. This means that risks may not be managed in a consistently effective manner.

Staff have good insight into young people's behaviours. Staff understand the types of behaviours young people may present and why. There are very few incidents requiring staff to physically intervene. This demonstrates the ability of staff to de-escalate situations before they reach crisis point.

Consequences are sometimes used to assist young people in developing safer and more appropriate behaviours. Records of consequences demonstrate that they are not used in an excessive manner and are generally fair and proportionate. However, monitoring of consequences is inconsistent. It is important that the use of consequences is monitored for consistency and that consequences are reviewed for effectiveness.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

There is a suitably qualified and experienced manager in place who has been registered with Ofsted since December 2016. He demonstrates the ability to develop very positive relationships with young people, who all spoke extremely highly of him during the inspection. The manager is supported by a well-established and highly experienced management team.

Staff are well motivated and proud of the home. They have high aspirations for the young people in their care. Staff reported a positive culture within which they feel able to express their views and share ideas.

There is a stable staff team with low turnover. Casual or agency staff are rarely used in the home. This means that young people benefit from consistency and are supported by staff who know them well and understand their needs. The manager is able to provide examples of changes to staffing levels, which have been made in response to young people's changing or emerging needs.

Staff reported good levels of training and support. Training is carefully monitored to help ensure that all staff remain up to date with their learning. In addition to the mandatory training programme, additional training is arranged to assist staff in meeting young people's more complex needs.

A number of managers and staff are involved in a variety of projects and forums designed to enhance practice across the team. For example, one staff member is part of a county-wide forum working to support young people's participation in services. This has enabled him to share a number of best-practice tools with the rest of the staff team members.

The manager uses quality assurance systems effectively to ensure that young people's progress and standards of quality and safety are consistently monitored. There is good evidence of learning from adverse incidents and a clear audit trail of actions taken in response. This means that young people benefit from a constantly improving service.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1241782

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider address: PO Box 78, County Hall, Fishergate, Preston PR1 8XJ

Responsible individual: Michael Nunn

Registered manager: Mark Davies

Inspector

Marie Cordingley, social care inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
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